

# Tom Kromkowski

## Indiana State Representative, District 7



Summer, 2001

Dear Friends:

The 2001 long session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended with the passage of a new state budget and several other important pieces of legislation. I am pleased we completed our work on time in a bipartisan manner.

The new two-year state budget includes increased funding for education, CHOICE and other important programs while avoiding a general tax increase. The budget also includes funding for several important local projects that are detailed inside this newsletter.

We passed several other laws that will benefit our state in a variety of areas, including health care, education, crime, election reform and environmental protection. We made improvements to our license branch operations and passed legislation that will protect consumers from annoying telephone calls with the establishment of a do-not-call list. I have described many of these new laws in the next few pages.

In addition, you will find a map of our new legislative district. We are required to redraw the district boundaries every 10 years due to population shifts. I welcome those of you who are new to the district and look forward to working with you in the coming months to make Indiana a better place to live.

Please contact my office if you have additional concerns or questions about state government. You may e-mail me at [H7@ai.org](mailto:H7@ai.org) or call toll-free at 1-800-382-9842.

Sincerely,

### CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE KROMKOWSKI



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## Inside

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# New budget increases school support, local development

Going into the 2001 legislative session, many observers felt that a sluggish economy would make it difficult to enact a biennial state budget without either passing a general tax increase or cutting funding for critical areas like public education. However, the budget bill that became law continues our record of avoiding general tax increases, while providing additional state support to our schools, health care and local projects.

The final version of House Enrolled Act 1001 enables the state to increase support for public schools across Indiana by an average of 3.5 percent each of the next two fiscal years, with minimum guarantees built in to help schools avoid cutting programs and personnel. Funding for higher education was increased by an average of 3.2 percent each year.

## Services and local development

The budget includes additional funding for the CHOICE program that provides in-home care services for the elderly and disabled, as well as Build Indiana Fund support for research and technology, community wastewater and drinking water grants, airport development and improvements to voting systems.

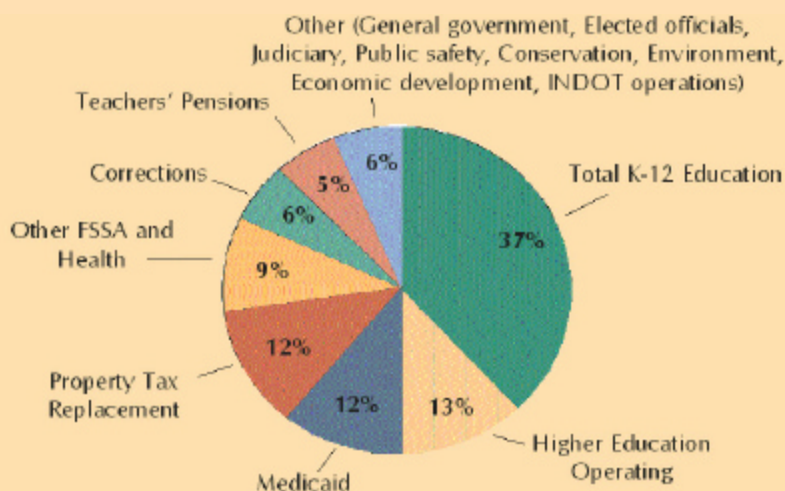
## Tax relief

It was disappointing that we were unable to provide the levels of tax relief that were included in past state budgets, but I am pleased that we were able to extend the life of the homestead credit at 10 percent and maintain the earned income tax credit that assists working families on lower incomes.

Businesses and farms will receive an income tax credit on personal property beginning in 2003, and mobile homes have been changed to be treated as real property with similar deductions. The budget bill continues to fund a statewide property tax relief program that now takes about 16 percent off all property taxes. When coupled with the 10 percent homestead credit, that translates to savings of around 26 percent.

A bill the size of the budget does not contain everything I would like, but considering the fiscal restraints facing legislators going into the 2001 session, I feel this budget is a major accomplishment.

## Spending highlights from the 2001-2003 budget



## Local economic reform focus of Kromkowski legislation

I was very pleased this year to author legislation addressing the economic needs of South Bend. House Enrolled Act 1195 provides a special tax capturing district for the Scottsdale Mall. Within this district the city can capture up to \$1 million in Indiana sales taxes generated at the mall. That money will then be used for improvements in the surrounding road, interchange, and right-of-way, and also for property acquisitions.

I also sponsored a bill to benefit the South Bend Studebaker Corridor. Senate Enrolled Act 457 allows St. Joseph County to establish a community revitalization enhancement district (CRED). The CRED is a district within the county that provides state and local tax credits for taxpayers making an investment in the district. The tax credit is intended to attract more businesses to those parts of the county which could use an economic boost.

The CRED also allows part of the tax money collected within the districts to be directed to a district industrial development fund. Those funds will enable local residents to have greater control over the money they pay in taxes, and allow communities to make long-term investments to prepare for the future.

The South Bend Studebaker Corridor currently has over 1.5 million vacant square feet of floor space in empty buildings, and has less than 18,000 employees. The Corridor must agree to use the tax credit to spend \$100,000 to address the present obstacles to redevelopment.



REP. KROMKOWSKI  
ADDRESSES THE  
HOUSE.



## Health care reform to aid Hoosiers

In 2001 lawmakers were able to build on the reforms passed in recent years that brought patients a stronger voice in decisions affecting their health care.

Senate Enrolled Act 365 gives patients a chance to **appeal care decisions** for all accident and sickness insurance coverage to an outside panel of medical professionals. Senate Enrolled Act 310 requires insurers and providers to **use easily understandable language** to describe procedures and diseases, and Senate Enrolled Act 311 requires insurance companies to pay so-called clean claims — those properly submitted and containing all

needed information — in a timely fashion.

Other health care related bills call for **supplying provider profiles to the general public** (HEA 1770) and allowing the state to help health care professionals pay their student loans in an effort to keep them in the state (SEA 533).

Disabled Hoosiers will be able to make substantial strides toward achieving self-sufficiency and preserving health care coverage through HEA 1950, which establishes a **statewide buy-in program** that would assure Medicaid coverage for workers with disabilities.

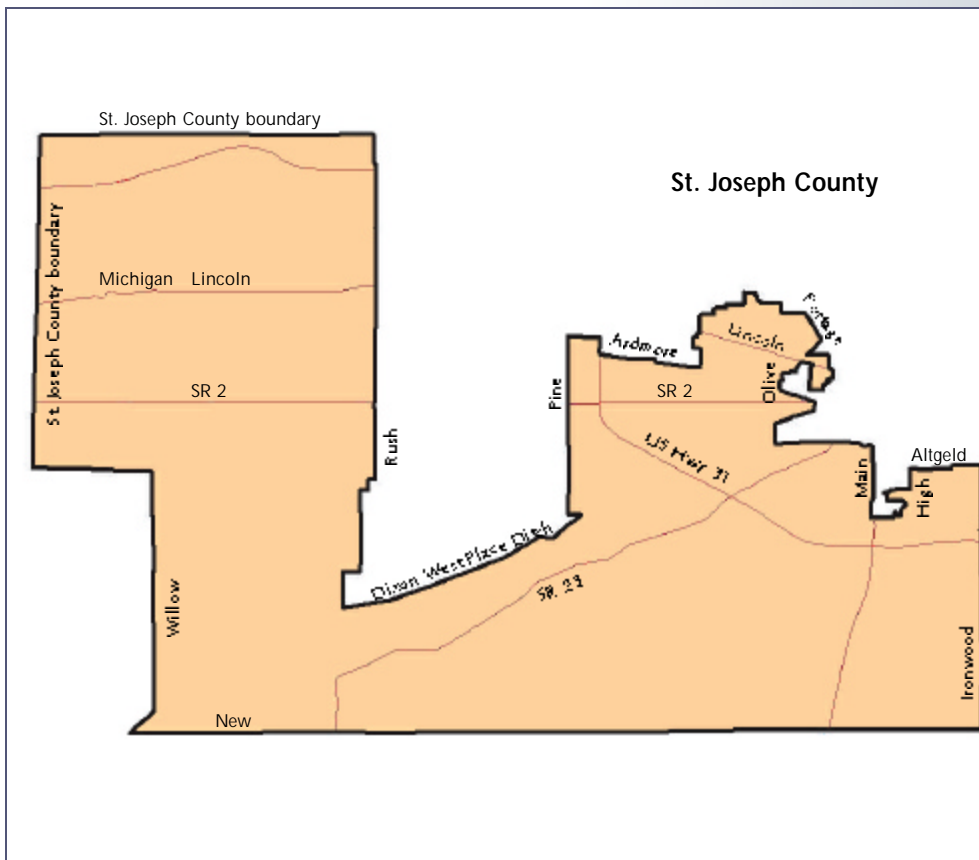
## Build Indiana Funds go to District 7



REP. KROMKOWSKI DISCUSSES LEGISLATION WITH REP. CHET DOBIS (D - MERRILLVILLE).

- St. Joseph County 4-H Fair, Inc. Restoration: \$10,000
- Hansel Neighborhood Service Center, Inc., South Bend: \$200,000
- Military Honor Park, South Bend: \$100,000
- St. Joseph County Road improvements: \$190,000

## The new look of District 7



During this year's session you may have heard about redistricting in the news. After each census, the Indiana General Assembly is required by law to redraw House, Senate and Congressional district boundaries according to population changes.

Each district must have 60,000 people, which means that as the population moves to or from various parts of the state, boundaries shift to reflect that change. District boundaries are very complicated, and it took months of effort and debate among legislators to reach a consensus. In the end, however, I feel that the district lines we have drawn are as fair as possible.

For both the current members and those new to the district, I look forward to serving you. Please contact me if you have questions about the district or any other matters.





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## Privacy from telemarketers and election reform

Stay informed about these  
and other issues online with  
Representative Kromkowski



Web: [www.in.gov/R7](http://www.in.gov/R7)

E-mail: [H7@ai.org](mailto:H7@ai.org)

In 2001, lawmakers took steps to help reduce the interruption of telemarketers calling you at home. Through House Enrolled Act 1222, you will be able to have your name placed on a do-not-call list that will **prohibit most solicitors from contacting you via the telephone**. To be placed on the list, contact the Office of the Indiana Attorney General about the **Telephone Privacy List at 1-888-834-9969**.

In the wake of the confusion that took place in the presidential election in Florida last fall, lawmakers in Indiana moved quickly to enact reforms that will change the way we handle elections here.

Senate Enrolled Act 268 gives counties the ability to enter into agreements with the state to purchase **upgraded voting equipment**. This allows counties to take

advantage of the state's ability to purchase large amounts of equipment and materials at discounted prices. Funds contained in the biennial state budget will help the state provide 50 percent matching grants to further reduce those costs. The same legislation also **eliminates the use of punch-card voting** in future elections.

Through provisions contained in House Enrolled Act 1510, the state has moved closer to improving voter registration in Indiana. The Indiana Election Division will make a **voter registration form available on the Internet** that people can download, fill out and mail in to be processed. The legislation also strives to update lists of eligible voters by removing names of people who are deceased and convicted felons who are in prison.